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(5534.)

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS

BETWEEN

GREAT BRITAIN AND MOROCCO.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 5533.]

1887.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
1	Mr. Kirby Green ..	6	Feb. 10, 1887	Unsatisfactory reply of Sultan to joint proposal for commercial negotiations. Suggests the abandonment of protection of natives in exchange for commercial advantages ..	1
2	London Chamber of Commerce	..	Mar. 24,	No efforts should be spared to obtain a Commercial Treaty on modern lines	5
3	To London Chamber of Commerce	..	28,	Subject is receiving attention of Mr. Kirby Green	5
4	Mr. Kirby Green ..	Telegraphic	Apr. 5,	May he discuss commercial question with Sultan unofficially?	5
5	To Mr. Kirby Green..	11 Telegraphic	6,	May discuss commercial question; that of protection still under consideration	6
6	Mr. Kirby Green ..	11	5,	Extends No. 4	6
7	„ „ ..	12	May 8,	Conversation with Sultan on commercial matters	6

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CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting Commercial Negotiations between Great Britain and Morocco.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 5533.]

No. 1.

Mr. Kirby Green to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received February* 21.)

(No. 6. Commercial.)

Tangier, February 10, 1887.

My Lord,

BY my despatch No. 30, Commercial, of the 18th November last, I had the honour of informing the Earl of Iddesleigh of the step I had consented to join my French and German colleagues in taking for the purpose of attempting to lead the Moorish Government into learning by practical experience the advantages of affording facilities for the exportation of some of the most important products of this country.

On the return of M. Féraud from the Moorish Court in the middle of last month he communicated to Baron Testa and me the translation of a letter addressed to him by Cid Emfadl Gharneet, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in reply to the proposal which we had authorized M. Féraud to make in our joint names.

A preliminary perusal of this reply, a translation of which I have the honour to transmit herewith, left me under the impression that it was a direct refusal on the part of the Moorish Government to accept our proposal, or even continue the negotiations for the conclusion of a Commercial Convention, unless we would first engage to carry out in every particular ("mettre en vigueur") the Madrid Convention on Protection of 1880.

But, later on, after Mr. de Vismes de Ponthieu had supplied me with a careful English translation (the one herewith inclosed) of the Arabic text of the letter to M. Féraud, I ascertained, though I was confirmed in the impression that our joint proposal had been rejected, that the Moorish Government clearly stated it would make no modification in the existing stipulations as to exports until the Madrid Convention had been revised; foreign merchants had abandoned their rights to have their native agents and "semsars" withdrawn from Moorish jurisdiction; and natives naturalized abroad should be unable to enjoy the benefits of their naturalization in Morocco, except under the consent, in each separate case, of the Moorish Government.

M. Féraud having, however, repeatedly stated to me that he considered the letter offered a basis for negotiation of the Commercial Convention, I was obliged to await a favourable opportunity until I could request my French colleague to point out to me in what portion of Cid Emfadl Gharneet's communication he found an opening for such negotiations or the justification for a hope that the Sultan was willing to temporarily make the solicited concessions.

The French Minister has only now explained to me that he had arrived at his conclusions from the tenour of conversations he had with the Sultan himself, as much as from the Vizier's letter, which he, M. Féraud, still believes wished us merely to take steps for the more strict observance of the Convention of Madrid, in view of the increase of trade which the contemplated concessions would give rise to. But my colleague has been quite unable to point out to me one single paragraph in the letter in support of the belief under which he quitted the Moorish Court, and I have reluctuantly come to understand that he must have had more pressing matters to

arrange with His Shereefian Majesty, and have had no time to spare for the advancement of the Commercial Convention.

I will not trouble your Lordship with a detailed review of the Vizier's letter; but from its tangled preamble, in which both M. Féraud and Baron Testa fancied they had discovered the Sultan's consent to discuss the question of a three years' permission to export wheat, barley, and cattle, I have gathered that the Sultan had at once declined permitting the said exportation for more than three months a-year, during a period of three years, and then only on condition that each year of the triennial term should be a year of abundance; and that, above all, this concession should have been recommended by the counsellors to whose consideration the Sultan had submitted it.

These counsellors, however, instead of having acquiesced in the concession, had based its rejection on six considerations (five only are given in the letter). The four first are the before-alluded-to arguments in support of the revision of the Madrid Convention, abolition of native agents, &c. The fifth advises that it should be stipulated that mercantile transactions "may only be carried on in the towns and ports at appointed places and at specified times; that they (the produce) may only be sold for ready money, and that it shall not be allowed that they (the merchants) go out on the roads to meet those who are conveying the goods, nor to commission any one to bring them from or take them into the interior."

Cid Emfadl Gharneet's request that he may be enabled to inform the Sultan whether the demand contained in the fifth consideration is acceptable can only be met by peremptory refusal to entertain it, for it is a naked and foolish device to close the interior of Morocco to foreign trade.

I must also draw your Lordship's attention to the fact that, in the Moorish Minister's letter, it is clearly stated that the Sultan, when submitting the proposed concessions for the consideration of his counsellors, explained that the products in question should be only allowed to be exported "on the basis of the existing duties." In my before-referred-to despatch No. 30, Commercial, of the 18th November last, I reported to your Lordship that I was careful to point out to M. Féraud that it would be useless for us to agree to alter the course of the past negotiations for the Commercial Treaty if the Sultan did not intend reducing to a 10 per cent. *ad valorem* duty the export dues of the described products, for the duties leviable according to the old Tariff are prohibitory.

A point has therefore now been reached where no further progress can be looked for as regards the conclusion of the Commercial Treaty, unless a new departure is taken by one of the interested sides. It would be useless to expect it on the part of the Moorish Government, and I see no likelihood of the speedy agreement of my French colleague to an idea which has occurred to me for attempting to gauge the sincerity of the Moorish declarations about the evils of the system of foreign protection of native subjects being at the bottom of the Shereefian Government's disinclination to advance its commercial intercourse.

The proposal which I venture most respectfully to submit for your Lordship's consideration is that your Lordship should authorize me, on my approaching visit to the Moorish Court, to ascertain the extent of the commercial advantages which the Sultan would be prepared to concede to Great Britain if Her Majesty's Government consented to drop the exercise of protection of natives in Morocco secured to it by the Madrid Convention.

From the Moorish point of view the concession should be regarded as immense, and the return to be made to us should accordingly be considerable. It would be my duty to put the above clearly before the Sultan, and prevent His Shereefian Majesty from inferring that he could bring about the renunciation by other means than those to be indicated by me. I would also have to point out to the Sultan that the example of the British trade in Morocco prospering under a new order of things would probably be the means of freeing his rule from the cause which is daily depriving it of all jurisdiction over ever-increasing numbers of its subjects, for the other foreign Governments, one by one, would be forced into following the course adopted with success by Great Britain.

There are many evils connected with the protection of Moors by foreigners with which it is not necessary that I should now trouble your Lordship. Not the least of them, however, is that an inordinately extended list of British-protected subjects necessarily dilutes the strength of my representations to the Moorish Government on behalf of *bond fide* British subjects, and otherwise lowers the standing of the English name in this country.

But it will be time enough to enter into a full examination of the advantages

and disadvantages of the privilege of protection when the extent of the commercial concessions which the Sultan may be disposed to make has been fully ascertained. These concessions then can be submitted to the consideration of Chambers of Commerce capable of taking broad and enlightened views, and not merely to that of traders of a class brought into existence through unhealthy surroundings.

In here suggesting the possible suppression of protection of natives, I have, of course, had no intention of touching the privilege which I and Consular officers have of attaching to our service a limited number of Moors. This privilege I would place on the footing of political protections, which the Moorish Government, like many other Mussulman and semi-civilized Governments, would continue to accept without objection.

Before concluding this despatch I feel that it is needful to warn your Lordship that, if my suggestion is not found altogether unworthy of attention by your Lordship, it is, nevertheless, likely to cause considerable commotion in certain influential quarters, such as the Board of Jewish Deputies of London, the Alliance Israélite of Paris, &c.

My proposal may be understood by them to carry with it the abandonment of a number of Morocco Jews who have, by various means, secured British protection, to the tender mercies of the rapacious and cruel Moorish authorities. Nothing has been further from my mind and intention than to bring about any such calamity. I am, in fact, convinced that my hand, as British Representative in Morocco, will be strengthened in all efforts to improve the position of the whole of the Moorish Jews, by my not having a special little band of Jews of my own for particular patronage and protection. Even now diplomatic pressure is more efficacious with the Sultan for the advancement of questions such as this one of the general welfare of his Jewish subjects than representations based on the terms of some Treaty stipulation which His Shereefian Majesty finds galling through its being ever present.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. KIRBY GREEN.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Cid Emfadl Gharneet to M. Féraud.

(Translation.)
(After compliments.)

WE have received your letter on the subject of the Convention of Commerce, in which you tell us, in your own name, and in that of the German and British Ministers, that the Commissioners sent by the Sultan to negotiate the Convention with you had parted from you before you had been able to explain to them fully the advantages that would accrue to this country from a reduction in the duties on exported merchandize, as thereby the price of such merchandize at its destination would be rendered equal to that of the produce of the land. You also propose that if you and they (the Commissioners) fail to come to an agreement touching the duty to be imposed on any merchandize, duty should be paid *ad valorem* on such merchandize.

We have communicated your letter to our Lord and Master, and His Majesty has taken it into consideration, and has commanded us to return you the answer which has already been communicated to you through His Majesty's Commissioners, viz., that all the great and distinguished men of this realm who have been consulted on the subject are of opinion that this (the proposed Convention) would produce no good, and have pointed out the evils that would result from it. One of these evils would be a decrease in the revenue from which the Government maintains the army and Administration, and the greatest of them the burden which would fall upon the people in the shape of contributions which it would become necessary to levy on them, such as gate and personal taxes, &c., in order to fill the Treasury and provide for the army.

That the Sultan also wrote to consult the whole of his people as to whether he should accept the lesser of the two evils, and allow the exportation of articles hitherto prohibited, such as wheat, and barley, and rams, bucks, bulls, and he-donkeys, for a period of three years only, by way of testing the advantages which you say would be derived therefrom, and this on the basis of the existing duties, and on the condition that the exportation of these things take place at harvest time whenever there is abundance, for the space of three months, after the lapse of which it would cease, and no claim to continue it would be entertained on any pretext whatsoever; the next

year also, if it is one of plenty, the exportation of these things would be permitted, during three months again, by way of experiment; but if there is scarcity, the experiment of exportation for the specified period would be suspended. All this would be on the express understanding that we are not hereby committed to any engagement, but that this concession is only made by way of an experiment, in order that we may see the results of it.

That when they let His Majesty know their opinion on this matter, the Sultan would communicate their reply to you.

Their answer is embodied in six [*sic*] Articles:—

1. The advantage of this experiment would be for others and not for themselves, and they would only reap great damage from it.

2. Among the evils resulting from it would be an abnormal increase in the number of "semsars" and of naturalized subjects, which everybody knows to be a great evil.

3. (If this experiment is to be made) it should be laid down that it will only take place after the revision of the Convention of Madrid, and the abolition of "semsars" and commercial agents, naturalization being maintained under the condition that patents of naturalization shall be given to nobody without the permission of the Government of this country, and that a list of protected persons shall be forwarded to the authorities every year, agreeably with the (present) provisions of the Treaty. The harm that would result from making this experiment before the revision of the Convention of Madrid is evident; disturbance and chaos would be produced in the markets, especially in those of the interior, because the "semsars" and other protected persons who will repair to them are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Moorish officials, and will therefore take away the goods of others for whatever price they think proper, and will oppress the poor among the people, and they will also commit many other acts which are not unknown to you. If the Sultan allowed this (the exportation of wheat and barley) before the Convention (of Madrid) is changed, it would be equivalent on his part to accepting the evils which would fall on the people, cheating the merchants, and permitting general commotion and disorder, and the setting at nought of the authority of his Governors; this is a state of things which the Powers could not desire or sanction.

4. The conclusion of a Treaty of Commerce must be delayed till after the Convention of Madrid has been revised as suggested, for most of the Articles of that Treaty are based on this Convention, and to set up the Treaty on this foundation before its (the Convention's) revision would be productive of great harm.

5. The exportation of these articles from the markets of the interior would lead to advances of money being made by merchants on grain, wool, and the like, to their owners, and when the term is passed, and the delivery of the goods is delayed, numerous altercations and quarrels will ensue, and the good which it is desired to attain will be turned to evil. Therefore it should be enacted that the trade in these things may only be carried on in the towns and ports at appointed places and at specified times to be made known to those who wish to buy and sell, and that they may only be sold for ready money; that it shall not be allowed to go out on the roads to meet those who are conveying the goods, nor to commission any one to bring them from, or take them into, the interior. Our Lord the Sultan has commanded us to inform you of this answer, in order that you may take it into serious consideration; men of your intelligence must know that these people are right in what they say, and if the Government does not support them there will be great discontent, for they ask no advantages for themselves, but only immunity from harm, and that you support their demand, which is that the Convention of Madrid be revised in the way suggested; this we believe you will do. As to the Regulations proposed in the Vth Article, if you approve of them, it is well; but if you know of anything better, tell us, that we may inform our Lord the Sultan. Peace.

(Signed) MOHAMMED EL EMFADL BEN MOHAMMED GHARNEET.

Rebia I, 28, 1304.

No. 2.

London Chamber of Commerce to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received March* 25.)

My Lord, 84-85, *King William Street, London, March* 24, 1887.

THE Council of the London Chamber of Commerce have been for some time past hopefully awaiting an announcement, that the negotiations for a new Commercial Treaty with Morocco were approaching a successful issue, and they trust that the new British Minister at Tangier will be encouraged by your Lordship to continue the efforts commenced by his predecessor to attain this desirable end.

The Council would respectfully venture to direct your Lordship's attention to its previous letters on the importance of concluding a Treaty on modern lines with Morocco. They believe that that country presents a most favourable field for the development of British trade, if the course of exchange of products is made more free, and the restrictions which at present hamper commercial intercourse are removed or modified. Such development would, in all probability, not only affect the dominions of the Emperor of Morocco, but also extend to the other districts of North-western Africa.

Without dwelling upon the natural resources of the country, the wealth of which will be known to your Lordship, or the favourable position of Morocco in regard to its distance from this country, the Council of the London Chamber desire further to impress upon your Lordship the desirableness of active steps being taken to preserve the favourable position of British interests in the Moorish Court, in view of the activity of the other European countries, and more especially of Spain, France, and Germany. The reports which have recently been circulated and eagerly noticed as to the rectification of the frontiers between the French North-western African possessions and Morocco may not be strictly accurate, but the importance which was attached to them is an evidence of the watchfulness of European States in regard to Morocco, and of the prevalent desire of the competitors of Great Britain to improve their position in every possible direction.

The Council therefore trust that it will be agreeable to your Lordship, the new British Minister at the Court of Morocco having now assumed office, to give instructions that no effort should be spared to obtain the final conclusion of a Commercial Treaty between the two countries at the earliest possible date, and to strengthen the British position generally in the Moorish dominions.

I am, &c.

(Signed) KENRIC B. MURRAY, *Secretary*.

No. 3.

Foreign Office to London Chamber of Commerce.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 28, 1887.

I AM directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th instant, urging that every effort be made to conclude a new Commercial Treaty with Morocco; and I am to state, in reply, for the information of the London Chamber of Commerce, that this matter is receiving the best attention of Her Majesty's Minister at Tangier.

I am, &c.

(Signed) JAMES FERGUSSON.

No. 4.

Mr. Kirby Green to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(*Received April* 5, 5·40 P.M.)

(Commercial.)
(Telegraphic.) *Tangier, April* 5, 1887, 3·35 P.M.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 6, Commercial, of the 10th February last, though I have received no instructions as yet from your Lordship, may I discuss question with Sultan and his Ministers in an unofficial way?

No. 5.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Mr. Kirby Green.

(No. 11. Commercial.)
(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, April* 6, 1887, 4·50 P.M.

YOUR telegram of yesterday.

You may speak about commercial matters, but question of protection in your No. 6 is still under consideration.

No. 6.

Mr. Kirby Green to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 11. Commercial. Ext. 12.)
My Lord, *Tangier, April* 5, 1887.

AS when I leave Tangier to proceed to the Moorish Court I shall be at once beyond reach of rapid communications, I venture to ask your Lordship, with reference to my despatch No. 6, Commercial, of the 10th February last, whether I may touch, in an unofficial manner, in my conversations with the Sultan and his Ministers, on the question of the advantages which the Moorish Government might be prepared to accord to British commerce and navigation, should it be found possible to modify our acquired rights of protection of natives in the service of British subjects.

I have already had the honour of telegraphing the substance of this despatch to your Lordship.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. KIRBY GREEN.

No. 7.

Mr. Kirby Green to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received May 26.)

(No. 12. Commercial.)
My Lord, *Morocco, May* 8, 1887.

DURING a private audience which I had the honour of having accorded to me on the 30th April by the Sultan, I touched upon the great delay which had arisen in the conclusion of the Commercial Treaty so much desired by ourselves, the French and the Germans.

His Majesty said he was not opposed to a new Commercial Treaty, but that he could not depart in the slightest degree from the ground taken up in the note addressed last autumn to M. Féraud. (See my despatch No. 6, Commercial, of the 10th February.)

To this I replied that I understood the note was being considered by Her Majesty's Government, and that I trusted the negotiations for the Treaty would shortly be renewed with a determination on all sides to bring them to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. KIRBY GREEN.

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